

US FOREST SERVICE NORTHWEST MONTANA BACKCOUNTRY AVALANCHE ADVISORY



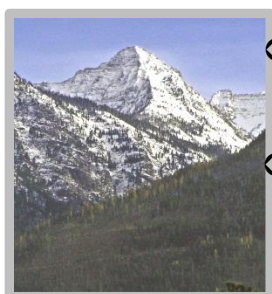
FOR THE GLACIER PARK AND FLATHEAD & KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST AREAS

Avalanche advisory does not apply to developed ski areas

Issue Date: 8 AM, Tuesday, January 24, 2012
Valid Until: Midnight, Tuesday, January 24, 2012
Next Update: Friday, January 27, 2012
Issued by: Tony Willits

This advisory is a product of the US Forest Service, US Dept. of Agriculture. Along with other snow and avalanche information, it is originally posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/flathead>. An audio summary is available via telephone at 406-257-8402

All Mountain Ranges



7,500 ft. elevation



5,000 ft.



Avalanche Danger Summary

2 - Moderate : 5,000 to 7,500 ft. elevation on steep, open terrain

1 - Low : below 5,000

AVALANCHE – INSTABILITY DESCRIPTION

All Mountain Ranges - 5,000 to 7,500 ft. elevation

Danger Level	2 - Moderate
Confidence	FAIR
Travel Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heightened avalanche conditions on steep, open slopes and gullies Evaluate snow and terrain carefully
Likelihood of Avalanches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural avalanche unlikely Human triggered avalanches possible
Avalanche Size & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small avalanches in specific areas or Larger avalanches in isolated areas

AVALANCHE – INSTABILITY DESCRIPTION

All Mountain Ranges - below 5,000 ft. elevation

Danger Level	1 - LOW
Confidence	Good
Travel Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally safe avalanche conditions exist Watch for unstable snow on isolated terrain features
Likelihood of Avalanches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both natural and human triggered avalanche unlikely
Avalanche Size & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very small avalanches in widespread areas or Small avalanche in isolated areas

Because of the general nature of this advisory message, each backcountry party will always need to make their own time and site specific avalanche hazard evaluations. This advisory best describes conditions at the time of its issuance. As time passes avalanche and snow conditions may change, sometimes quite rapidly. Elevation and geographic distinctions used are approximate and transition zones between hazards exist.

Recent Mountain Weather

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday -0300 Tuesday --- A warm moist air mass accompanied by variable southwest winds entered our region midday Friday through early Sunday allowing for moderate to heavy accumulations in portions of our region. Since early Sunday this pattern was replaced by cooler, dryer conditions with light snowfall Sunday. Conditions on Monday improved with clearing skies which extended into Tuesday AM.
Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midday Friday through 0600 on Sunday brought 1.2 to 2.6 inches of Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) to the East and West Cabinets along with the McDonald Lake area of Glacier NP. The rest of our region, in this same time period, received .5 to 1.0 inches of SWE. In the last 48 hours the entire region has received less than .5 inches of SWE.
Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temperatures started cool on Friday, warmed Saturday to above freezing and started a cooling trend into Tuesday AM. Temperatures early Tuesday were in the mid teens to single digits at recorded sites. .
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW winds were moderate at ridge tops on Saturday around the region. Wind transport did occur onto lee aspects from SW winds, through the period. .

Field Observation Locations

Monday, 1-23-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whoopee Basin in the West Cabinets 14 air miles south of Troy Little Shields north of Fielding
Observer Report Locations	
Friday 1-20-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shields to Little Shields near Snowslip
Sunday 1-22-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shields (again, see GCAC web for info)

Avalanches Observed

No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No recent natural avalanches were observed. Good visibility
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Instability Concern / Avalanche Problem	Level of Concern	Most★★★ Less★★ Least ★		
New Storm or Near Surface Snow	★★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant amounts of new snow Tuesday night through Thursday (approx. 17-22 inches of new depth) Wednesday's snowfall generally warm and at a higher density Surface layers inverted with weak buried structure attempting to support heavier surface layers. 		
Wind Loading	★★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW winds will increase from moderate to strong, Tuesday night through Wednesday. Wind transport can be expected on lee sides of ridges. 		
Recent or Persistent Buried Weak Layer	★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persistent weak layers, buried surface hoar and faceted interfaces, exist in the snowpack. A weak decomposing faceted structure exists from 30 to 40 cms from the ground surface, within pockets across the region. 		
Spring Wet Snow or		Not applicable		

Melt-Freeze		
Rain-on-Snow		Not applicable
Loose Snow		None observed
Other Concerns	★	Watch for rising snow levels beyond predicted levels.

Weather Forecast

[Current NWS Backcountry Forecast](#)

<u>Summary</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A plume of warm moisture is anticipated to move into the Northern Rockies, Tuesday night and extend into Thursday. This system will cause steady snow to the higher terrain. This system will cause gusty W/SW winds above 6000 feet.
Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 to 3 inches of new snow is expected Tuesday night and up to 1 foot by Wednesday night.
Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temperatures will warm from the mid twenties on Tuesday into the mid thirties on Wednesday. .
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winds will escalate with moderate SW winds on Tuesday night, increasing to strong SW by Wednesday.

Avalanche Outlook

Trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The avalanche danger is expected to escalate at all elevations by Wednesday night.
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The prediction is for up to 1 foot of new snow on Wednesday accompanied by moderate to strong southwest winds. This snow fall on Wednesday will fall during warming temperatures and rising snow levels. This will create a more dense snow pack over a less dense underlying layer(s).
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry and know how to use avalanche safety equipment Watch for a possible rapid change in weather conditions beyond forecast amounts Check out the site specific snow stability before jumping in or on

Upcoming Events

Flathead National Forest is hosting a public advanced avalanche awareness and safety workshop particularly for snowmobilers:

- Four night lecture series, Mondays and Wednesdays, **January 23, 25, 30, & February 1**
- Two Saturday field sessions, **January 28 & February 4**, location and time to be announced at lecture
- This is a series of lectures that builds on previous topics, participants are encouraged to attend all sessions
- Free of cost
- No registration, just show at the door on the north side of the building.
- Flathead Nat'l Forest Supervisor's and Tally Lake Ranger District Office
- 650 Wolfpack Way ... On Stillwater Rd, west of Glacier High School, and just north of Montana State DNRC office
- Time for night lectures is **6:30 – 9:30 PM**